

President Johnson's Speech.

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen of the Committee:

Language is inadequate to express the emotions and feelings produced by this occasion. Perhaps I could express more by permitting silence to speak and you to infer what I ought to say. I confess that, notwithstanding the experience I have had in public life and the audiences I have addressed, this occasion and this assemblage are calculated to, and do overwhelm me. As I have said, I have not language to convey adequately my present feelings and emotions.

In listening to the address which your eloquent and distinguished chairman has just delivered, the proceedings of the Convention, as they transpired, recurred to my mind. Seemingly I partook in the inspiration that prevailed in the Convention when I received a dispatch, sent by two of its distinguished members, conveying in terms the scene which has just been described, of South Carolina and Massachusetts, arm in arm, marching into that vast assemblage, and thus giving evidence that the two extremes had come together again, and that for the future they were united, as they had been in the past, for the preservation of the Union. When I was thus informed that in that vast body of men, distinguished for intellect and wisdom, every eye was suffused with tears on beholding the scene, I could not finish reading the dispatch to one associated with me in my office, for my own feelings overcame me. [Applause.] I think we may justly conclude that we are acting under a proper inspiration, and that we need not be mistaken that the finger of an overruling and unerring Providence is in this great movement.

The nation is in peril. We have just passed through a mighty, a bloody, a momentous ordeal, and yet do not find ourselves free from the difficulties and dangers that at first surrounded us. While our brave soldiers, both officers and men (turning to General Grant, who stood at his right) have by their heroism won laurels imperishable, there are still greater and more important duties to perform; and while we have had their co-operation in the field, now that they have returned to civil pursuits we need their support in our efforts to restore the Government and perpetuate peace. So far as the Executive department is concerned, the effort has been made to restore the Union, to heal the breach, to pour oil into the wounds which were consequent upon the struggle, and (to speak in common phrase) to prepare, as the learned and wise physician would, a plaster, healing in character and co-extensive with the wound. We thought, and we think, that we had partially succeeded; but as the work progresses, as reconciliation seemed to be taking place, and the country was becoming re-united, we found a disturbing and marvellous element opposing us. In alluding to the element I shall go no further than your Convention and the distinguished gentleman who has delivered to me the report of its proceedings. I shall make no reference to it that I do not believe the time and the occasion justify.

We have witnessed in one department of the Government, as it were, a body called, or which assumes to be the Congress of the United States, while in fact it is a Congress of only part of the States. We have seen this Congress pretend to be for the Union, when its very step and act tended to perpetuate disunion, and make a disruption of the States inevitable. Instead of promoting reconciliation and harmony, its legislation has partaken of the character of penalties, retaliation and revenge. This has been the course and the policy of one portion of your Government. The humble individual who now addresses you stands as the representative of another department of the Government. The manner in which he was called upon to occupy that position I shall not allude to on this occasion. Suffice it to say that he is here under the Constitution of the country, and being here by virtue of its provisions, he takes his stand upon that charter of our liberties as the great rampart of civil and religious liberty. Having been taught in my early life to hold it sacred, and having done so during my whole public career, I shall ever continue to reverence the Constitution of my fathers, and to make it my guide.

I know it has been said (and I must be permitted to indulge in the remark) that the Executive Department of the Government has been despotic and tyrannical. Let me ask this audience of distinguished gentlemen to point to a vote I ever gave, to a speech I ever made, to a single act of my whole public life that has not been against tyranny and despotism. What position have I ever occupied—what ground have I ever assumed where it can be truthfully charged that I failed to advocate the amelioration and elevation of the great masses of my countrymen?

So far as charges of this kind are concerned, they are only to delude the public mind into the belief that it is not the designing men who make such accusations, but some one else in power, who is usurping and trampling upon the rights and perverting the principles of the Constitution. It is done by them for the purpose of covering their own acts—and I have felt it my duty, in vindication of principles, to call the attention of my countrymen to their proceedings. When we come to examine who has been playing the part of the tyrant, by whom do we find despotism exercised? As to myself, the elements of my nature, the pursuits of my life, have not made me, either in my feelings or in my practice, oppressive. My nature, on the contrary, is rather defensive in its

character. But having taken my stand upon the broad principles of liberty and the Constitution, there is not power enough on earth to drive me from it! (Loud and prolonged cheering.) Having placed myself upon that broad platform, I have not been awed or dismayed, or intimidated by either threats or encroachments; but have stood there, in conjunction with patriotic spirits, sounding the tocsin of alarm when I deemed the citadel of Liberty in danger. [Great applause.]

I said on a previous occasion, and repeat now, that all that was necessary in this great contest against tyranny and despotism was that the struggle should be sufficiently audible for the American people to hear and properly understand the issues it involved. They did hear, and looking on and seeing who the contestants were and what the struggle was about, determined that they would settle this question on the side of the Constitution and of principle. [Cries of "That's so," and applause.] I proclaim here to-day, as I have on previous occasions, that my faith is in the great mass of the people. In the darkest moment of this struggle, when the clouds seemed to be most lowering, my faith, instead of giving way, loomed up through their gloom: for, beyond, I saw that all would be well in the end. My countrymen, we all know that, in the language of Thomas Jefferson, tyranny and despotism can be exercised and exerted more effectually by the many than the one. We have seen Congress gradually encroach step by step upon constitutional rights, and violate, day after day and month after month, fundamental principles of the Government.—[Cries of "That's so," and applause.] We have seen a Congress that seemed to forget that there was a limit to the sphere and scope of legislation. We have seen a Congress in a minority assume to exercise power which, if allowed to be consummated, would result in despotism or monarchy itself. [Enthusiastic applause.] This is truth; and because others, as well as myself, have seen proper to appeal to the patriotism and republican feeling of the country, we have been denounced in the severest terms. Slander upon slander, vituperation upon vituperation, of the most virulent character, has made its way through the press. What, gentlemen, has been your and my sin? What has been the cause of our offending? I will tell you. Daring to stand by the Constitution of our fathers!

Mr. Chairman, I consider the proceedings of this Convention equal to, if not more important than those of any Convention that ever assembled in the United States. [Great applause.] When I look upon that collection of citizens, coming together voluntarily, and sitting in council, with ideas, with principles and views commensurate with all the States, and co-extensive with the whole people, and contrast it with a Congress whose policy, if persisted in, will destroy the country, I regard it as more important than any Convention that has sat—at least since 1787. [Renewed applause.] I think I may also say that the declarations that were there made are equal to those contained in the Declaration of Independence. [Cries of "Glorious," and most enthusiastic and prolonged applause.] Your address and declarations are nothing more or less than a re-affirmation of the Constitution of the United States. [Cries of "Good," and applause.]

Yes, I will go farther and say that the declarations you have made, that the principles you have enunciated in your address, are a second proclamation of emancipation to the people of the United States. [Renewed applause.] For in proclaiming and re-proclaiming these great truths, you have laid down a constitutional platform on which all, without reference to party, can make common cause, engage in a common effort to break the tyranny which the dominant party in Congress has so relentlessly exercised, and stand united together for the restoration of the States and the preservation of the government.

The question only is the salvation of the country; for our country rises above all party considerations or influences. [Cries of "Good," and applause.] How many are there in the United States that now require to be free? They have the shackles upon their limbs, and are bound as rigidly by the behests of party leaders in the National Congress as though they were in fact in slavery. I repeat, then, that your declaration is the second proclamation of emancipation to the people of the United States, and offers a common ground upon which all patriots can stand. [Applause.]

In this connection, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, let me ask what have I to gain more than the advancement of the public welfare? I am as much opposed to the indulgence of egotism as any one; but here, in a conversational manner, while formally receiving the proceedings of this Convention, I may be permitted again to inquire what have I to gain consulting human ambition more than I have gained, except one thing—the consummation of the great work of restoration? My race is nearly run. I have been placed in the high office which I occupy by the Constitution of the country, and I may say that I have held from lowest to the highest, almost every station to which a man may attain in our Government. I have passed through every position, from alderman of a village to the Presidency of the United States. And surely, gentlemen, this should be enough to gratify a reasonable ambition. If I had wanted authority, or if I had wished to perpetuate my own power, how easily could I have held and wielded that which was placed in my hands by the measure called the Freedmen's Bureau

bill. [Laughter and applause.] With an army which it placed at my discretion, I could have remained at the capital of the nation, and, with fifty or sixty millions of appropriations at my disposal, with the machinery to be unlocked by my own hands, with my satraps and dependents in every town and village, with the civil rights bill following as an auxiliary, [laughter,] and with the patronage and other appliances of the Government, I could have proclaimed myself dictator. ["That's true!" and applause.]

But, gentlemen, my pride and my ambition have been to occupy that position which retains all power in the hands of the people. [Great cheering.] It is upon them I have always relied; it is upon them I rely now. [A voice, and the people will not disappoint you, and I repeat that neither the taunts nor jeers of Congress nor of a subsidized, calumniating press can drive me from my purpose. [Great applause.] I acknowledge no superior except my God, the author of my existence, and the people of the United States. [Prolonged and enthusiastic cheering.] The commands of the one I try to obey as best I can, compatible with poor humanity. As to the other, in a political and representative sense, the high behests of the people have always been and ever will be respected and obeyed by me. [Applause.]

Mr. Chairman, I have said more than I intended to say. For the kind allusion to myself, contained in your address, I thank you. In this crisis and at the present period of my public life, I hold above all price and shall ever recur with feelings of profound gratification to the resolution containing the endorsement of a Convention emanating spontaneously from the great mass of the people. With conscientious conviction as my courage, the Constitution as my guide, and my faith in the people, I trust and hope that my future action may be such that you and the Convention you represent may not regret the assurance of confidence you have so generously expressed. ["We are sure of it."] Before separating, my friends, one and all, please accept my heartfelt thanks for the kind manifestations of respect you have exhibited on this occasion.

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Spectacles for all Eyes and Ages.
WATCHES, CLOCKS AND JEWELRY neatly repaired, and warranted.
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He is prepared to do such work as ROOFING, GUTTERING AND REPAIRING. He will work and sell, wholesale or retail, LOW FOR CASH. All work warranted.
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Feb 1 1 1y

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He may be found at his Shop in rear of J. B. ARCHER'S STORE, where his customers will find plates of the latest fashions.
Feb 1 1 1y

TAILORING.
HAVING just returned from a trip North and West, takes this method of informing his former Patrons and Friends, that he is now prepared to fill all orders with neatness and dispatch in the very LATEST STYLES, as cheap as any one for Cash or Barter.
My shop is over the store of FOSTER & JUD'S, opposite the Court House.
The latest SPRING FASHIONS have just been received.
WM. LOCKWOOD.
Feb 1 1 1y

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ATTORNEYS AT LAW
AND
Solicitors in Equity,
Office in Brick Building, upstairs, over former Office of James Farrow.
JAMES FARROW, } D. R. DUNCA, }
April 15 11 1y

WILLIAMS, EVINS & CHOICE,
ATTORNEY'S AT LAW,
SPARTANBURG, S. C.
Geo. W. WILLIAMS, Yorkville, S. C.
Jso. H. EVINS,
WILLIAM CHOICE.
June 14 20 6m

LAW COPARTNERSHIP.
HAVING associated C. J. ELFORD, of Greenville, S. C., with me in the practice of law for Spartanburg District, under the name and style of ELFORD & ELFORD; all business entrusted to my care will receive the prompt and faithful attention of said firm.
J. M. ELFORD.
April 5 10 6m

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Teppé & Smyth
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April 26 13 1y

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and many other articles too numerous to mention, which we offer at cheap rates.
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April 5 10 1y

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WE are now receiving a capital assortment of GOODS, selected by a member of our firm in the Northern market.
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LATEST STYLES OF
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May 24 17 1y

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April 11 5 1y

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March 1 5 1y

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Feb 15 3 1y